

Media, PA – Part of Jefferson Hospital Home Health System, JeffQuip Rehab in Boothwyn is the organization's home medical equipment branch and provides complex rehabilitation technology to those with significant disabilities. Complex rehab includes mobility and positioning equipment, and allows individuals to be independent and be functional in the community.

— Today, Congressman Joe Sestak (PA -07) toured two of JeffQuip's buildings and spoke to more than 50 employees about health care issues, including the Medicare Access to Complex Rehabilitation and Assistive Technology Act of 2007 (H.R. 2231).

"The financial health of Medicare needs to be fortified if the program is to continue protecting beneficiaries from the cost of health care," said the Congressman, noting that the U.S. Census indicated that as of January 2006 there were more than 2 million Pennsylvanians enrolled in Medicare. "Furthermore, we must do all we can to ensure that those with significant disabilities continue to have access to high quality complex rehabilitation equipment."

H.R. 2231 was referred to the House Subcommittee on Health on May 15, 2007. The bill, which the Congressman supports, would exempt complex rehab and assistive technology from the national competitive bidding program was The Medicare Prescription Drug, Improvement, and Modernization Act of 2003 established a national competitive acquisition program for durable medical equipment. The program is scheduled to begin this year and will be phased in over several years. Center for Medicaid and Medicare Services (CMS) has chosen to include complex rehab and assistive technology products in the first round of competitive bidding. Including complex rehab equipment in the competitive bidding program means that Medicare beneficiaries will be unable to obtain appropriate technology necessary to meet their functional and medical needs.

Currently, complex rehab technologies are not commodity products that are easily interchangeable. Each consumer of complex rehab technology has individual and specialized needs that require extensive customization. Furthermore, competitive bidding fails to allow for the level of services and significant costs associated with the delivery of complex rehab technology to people with disabilities. Properly fitted equipment has a significant role not only in providing consumers with their greatest level of independence, but also in preventing or delaying related medical complications which can increase health care costs significantly.

Born and raised in Delaware County, former 3-star Admiral Joe Sestak served in the Navy for 31 years and now serves as the Representative from the 7th District of Pennsylvania. He led a series of operational commands at sea, including Commander of an aircraft carrier battle group of 30 U.S. and allied ships with over 15,000 sailors and 100 aircraft that conducted operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. After 9/11, Joe was the first Director of "Deep Blue," the Navy's anti-terrorism unit that established strategic and operations policies for the "Global War on Terrorism." He served as President Clinton's Director for Defense Policy at the National Security Council in the White House, and holds a Ph.D. in Political Economy and Government from Harvard University. According to the office of the House Historian, Joe is the highest-ranking former military officer ever elected to the Congress.